Precision National Plating Services
Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania

Cleanup Update June 2002

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1650 Arch Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 www.epa.gov

Introduction

This update provides the most recent information about the assessment of chromium contamination and its effects at the Precision National Plating Services hazardous waste site at 198 Ackerly Road in Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania. The company ceased operations in 1999 and demolished its plant in 2000.

Precision is carrying out the investigation and cleanup under a 1998 order and the supervision of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The company has been testing the soil, drinking water, surface water and groundwater to assess the potential risk to public health and the environment.

Water

- **A groundwater study** to fully understand the type and extent of underground water contamination is ongoing. The company collects groundwater quarterly. A draft **groundwater report** on contamination is due this month.
- Results from water samples taken in **Glenburn Pond and Ackerly Creek** should be available by July.
- EPA is planning a study of **sport fish in Glenburn Pond** to make sure the fish are safe to eat.
- A **new monitoring well** will be installed this summer under the former basement of the plant to see if chromium contamination is still present.
- **Tests on 95 private residential wells** from February through June 1999 showed that private wells within a one-mile radius meet state and federal drinking water standards for chromium. Those nearby residents who are connected to the public water supply are unaffected by site contamination.
- **A seep collection system** is already in place to catch contaminated groundwater that seeps out of the ground. The water is collected and then treated to remove hexavalent chromium. The system was completed in

November 2001. It is inspected and maintained on a regular basis.

Soil

- **Residential soil samples** taken directly downhill, to determine if chromium had migrated off-site. The results show very low levels of chromium, well within the limits set by state and federal standards.

- The state and federal health agencies have determined that such low **chromium levels in soil do not pose a health risk.** Therefore, no further residential soil samples are planned.

- Precision voluntarily **removed an on-site encapsulation vault,** which was an area where contaminated soil was deposited for storage. Because this soil posed a potential risk, the soil was removed and disposed of off-site at a hazardous waste landfill.

Risk Assessments

- The results of an **epidemiological survey** conducted by Dr. Edward Emmett of the University of Pennsylvania will reveal whether the ailments of various former and past residents who lived near the site have a common cause, and whether these ailments are consistent with long-term hexavalent chromium exposure.

- Precision is gathering data for an **ecological risk assessment** which will determine if the site has impacted the surrounding environment.

- The **focus of the risk assessment is Ackerly Creek and Glenburn Pond** where samples of the surface water, sediment, soil, groundwater and organisms have been taken.

- **Additional surface water samples** will be taken to compare with previous results to determine if chromium concentrations have decreased since the installation of the seep treatment system and to evaluate further potential risks to the environment.

What is Chromium?

Chromium is a metal that comes in many forms, both natural and manmade. The manmade hexavalent form (the type found at the Precision site) is used in plating, dyes, pigments, leather tanning and wood preserving. It dissolves easily in water and can trickle deeply into groundwater. While the natural form of chromium is an essential nutrient, the hexavalent form, when inhaled at high levels, can irritate the nose and sinuses. Ingesting large amounts of chromium can cause digestive, kidney and liver damage, and skin contact can cause ulcers, redness and swelling. Studies have shown that inhalation of hexavalent chromium vapors over a long period of time may cause cancer.

For More Information

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